

Sisters of Jesus Way



Advent 2016

Our dear friends,

Dark mornings and evenings are here again. We always part reluctantly with light summer days despite the fact that it means much less work! No more watering! There is sadness when we see the swallows departing and a slight sense of disbelief when we start the day in darkness and before our evening meal; the curtains are drawn, as if to keep out the night which has come too soon.

Isaiah spoke about the darkness of the land, in the well-loved verse of Isaiah 9:2, “The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned”. The familiar words which are often read in the season of Advent bring comfort and hope. There was no street lighting in Isaiah’s day. It was black at night, the haunt of robbers and dangerous for those who had the misfortune to be travelling. This verse does not only refer to physical, but spiritual darkness. Perhaps that is why we find the words so comforting. We too live in a ‘world of deep darkness’. This is all too apparent at the present time.

In the early days of our community we were taught not to be drawn into that darkness. We often share this with groups, or individuals. We may have written about it. It was some of the most helpful advice we have been given. What do we do when someone around us is in a black mood? We can see it. We can feel it. The temptation is to be drawn in. In other words, we are annoyed that the offender is spoiling what would otherwise have been a perfect day! So we add to the darkness because our peace, that peace that Jesus said would always be there for us, departs and accusing thoughts take its place. This was exactly what was happening to us until we were shown a better way. Quite simply it was, in our imagination, to place the cross of Jesus or the blood of Jesus between ourselves and the darkness. In so doing, we are asking the protection of Jesus to keep us in the light. He does. We are then able to pray and ask God’s blessing on the person who is finding life so difficult and at the same time continue with a heart at peace.

Of course, this is relatively simple in the context of a Christian community, or it should be, once someone points the way. Sometimes we are in situations far more threatening. This has happened to us several times over the years. Often it starts with one person but it does not take long for others to be drawn in and before we know where we are, it is persecution. It isn’t literally physical torture or death, but it is character assassination. It is darkness right on our doorsteps. We often forget that this is what Jesus promised for his followers. For our part, the same lesson applies. We are only in danger, when we ourselves are drawn into the darkness. Isaiah’s words echo through the ages, “Keep calm and don’t be afraid” (Isaiah 7:4 NIV). This is impossible, if we try to accomplish it in our own strength. This calmness is none other than the peace of God and that is a gift. If we refuse to be drawn into the darkness, by resentment, gossip, or anger, our hearts are open to this precious gift. We have experienced this when it has seemed as if the powers of darkness were doing their worst but the Lord has kept us in perfect peace. This is the answer to our fear. Anxiety is excluded. We again place the cross of Jesus between ourselves and those who mean us harm. We can even feel compassion for those who are intent on destroying us. This too, is a gift.

There are some other wise words from Isaiah and he, when he said them, was in a very threatening situation. “If you do not stand firm in your faith, you will not stand at all” (Isaiah 7:9 NIV). The faith that the prophet is talking about is faith in God. That is where our eyes need to be – on Him. If we focus on the darkness then it will overwhelm us. The Lord will protect us. He will keep us in the light – the light that Jesus promised and which no darkness can quench. Leave the answer to the situation, whatever it is, to Him. The last word is always with God. This is faith and again it is a gift and one for which we need to pray, for without it we will fall. Jesus said, “Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you” (Matthew 5:11-12 NIV). Perhaps we are not quite there yet! We would hesitate to say that we have been joyful and glad when the Prince of this World has come pounding on our door, but we can truthfully say that

the Lord has brought us through and kept us in his peace. Blessing has followed. If He can do this for us, He can do it for anyone.

So whatever situations some of you may be facing right now, take courage, there is a way through. We have a wonderful God who loves us; trust him.

On Nov. 5th we had a joyful service when Sister Pamela became a Lamb and Cross Sister. It has been a joy for us to have Pamela with us, so willing in whatever tasks need doing. We share not only our work but our spiritual journey. It has been a privilege to accompany Sister Pamela on her pilgrimage with God. For those unfamiliar with our terminology, a Sister when she first enters the community is a Way Sister, then after a suitable length of time becomes a Lamb and Cross Sister wearing for the first time on her dress and scarf the image of the Lamb and Cross. Eventually we celebrate a Bridal Consecration and promise simplicity, chastity and fidelity. At this service we make a life-commitment.



Later in the same service four new Followers of the Lamb, the small group who work alongside us, made their promises. They were Joan Metcalfe, Anne Paterson, Keith Abraham and Glyn Thomas. So now we will have Brother Keith in the kitchen one day a week and Brother Glyn mostly working in the garden, although like us he has to be adaptable to different needs on particular days. Sister Anne turns her hand to many things but excels in preparing our newsletter for the post, while Sister Joan is accomplished on the keyboard. We thank the Lord for each of them. Bishop Peter led the service and spoke. It is always a joy to have him with us.

The same week, Zoe, who we have known for a number of years, joined us as a Call Sister.

Many of you have helped us this year in different ways. This is our opportunity to thank each one of you. We seem to have encountered a number of situations about which we hadn't a clue! Sometimes there has been a multiplicity of them coming together. We would especially like to thank Dan Paterson, husband of Sister Anne. What he hasn't known, he has found out for us. We are immensely grateful, as it has saved us many hours of investigating. We are not convinced that we would have gained such a good grasp of a situation, as he obviously has on our behalf. The problem he then has is explaining it to us, but we have just about managed to keep up! We are also grateful to our church, St Mary's. They make no demands on us but quietly support us in many ways. No church is perfect but this is the most authentically Christian church (i.e. they live what they preach) we have experienced. We are so grateful that the Lord led us there. Thank you especially to all of you who pray for us. It is very humbling for us to know how many of you do.

We adopted a two year-old rescue dog from Croatia. After our last dog, Thomas, who could well have been called 'St Thomas' as he was so well behaved, Jake has been a challenge! We love him and would not part with him. It has been a steep learning curve, as we have tried to heal the damage caused by his former life. Every small victory has given us joy and those who know about animal behaviour say that we are doing very well! We can still sometimes see a look of puzzlement in his eyes when we make a fuss of him as if he is thinking, "Is this going to last and is it for real?" As far as we can tell, he is a Croatian sheep dog cross with all the vitality, energy and intelligence associated with that breed.

Our Cancer Friends Together, a support group for those affected by this disease, continues to meet here. It gives us great joy. There is such love in this group that it warms our hearts.

We were hoping our new book, 'Precious in His Sight', would be out by Christmas, but we haven't made it. Our publisher, being Welsh, has suggested we aim for St David's Day, March 1st. We ourselves are not confident that we will make even that date! We have Easter in mind and, God willing, it will be available then. We will put a notice on our website www.redacre.org.uk This book tells the story of the Sisters of Jesus Way. It is a tale of the love and care of the Heavenly Father right up to the present day.

As we look in dismay at the suffering, unstable world in which we live and which we see so vividly reported each day, may the Lord keep us faithful in prayer and may His Presence with us bring light, hope and peace.

With love from your Sisters and Brothers at Jesus Way.



Sisters of Jesus Way, Redacre, 24 Abbey Road, West Kirby, Wirral, CH48 7EP.

Tel No. 0151 625 8775. E-mail: sistersofjesusway@redacre.org.uk

Website: www.redacre.org.uk

We are registered with the Charity Commissioners